



JOHN

**Frances Perkins – Madame Secretary**

**Dr. Charles A. Siler & Dr. Marion  
Price – their story by Carolyn Siler**

**DAR Irondequoit Chapter – 125  
years of Service**

Go to [holleypix.com](http://holleypix.com)

**Fresh Flowers**



## Welcome to JOHN

The Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta was great this year. Weather was good and the balloons really looked good all over town. If you haven't attended, you should make it a point to attend a future Fiesta. Christine and I want to be the first to wish all a very happy & safe holiday season.

Every once in a while, I find myself realizing that I should know more about someone I have researched. Francis Perkins is no stranger to many, but in spite of her having so much impact on many of things we take for granted today, I do not recall ever having her story told in any of my classes. Hope to remedy this just a little bit with this issue.

Carolyn Siler shared with us the story of her Grandparents, Charlie and Marion Siler. This initial story outlines one fine example of what so many have accomplished in their lives in days gone by. Carolyn and I are cousins and we first connected back in 2016, while we were both doing some Holley research. I am so glad that she took up the challenge to share just one little part of her family history. A pretty interesting one at that, thanks, Carolyn for sharing.

Christine and I traveled to Rochester, NY in September to attend the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, Irondequoit Chapter's 125th Anniversary celebration. It was a great success and the grave dedication, program and luncheon were outstanding. Check out the YouTube video of this meaningful event.

What would the Holiday season be without the reading of the "Twas the Night before Christmas." Clement Moore, the author of the poem was a reticent man and it is believed that a family friend, Miss H. Butler, sent a copy of the poem to the TROY Sentinel who published the poem. Orville L. Holley was the editor of the Sentinel. The condition of publication was that the author was to remain anonymous. JAH

# Frances Perkins

Frances Perkins was born on April 10, 1882, in Boston, Massachusetts, of an upper middle-class Republican family. Her birth name was Fanny Coralie, which she later legally changed to Frances. When she was two years old the family relocated to Worcester, Massachusetts, where her father opened a profitable stationery business. She spent her childhood there. Her parents, both devoted Congregationalists, instilled in Frances a strong desire to **"live for God and to accomplish something in life."** Frances enrolled in the predominately male Worcester Classical High School. Trained as a teacher, she taught at numerous universities and authored two books. She is best described as a woman with a mission. Not a single-issue person, Perkins was prone to women`s causes and she highly valued individual liberty. Taking part in the women`s suffrage movement, marching in suffrage parades and giving street-corner speeches became her *modus operandi*. It was in the summer of 1909 that Perkins decided to move to New York City to survey the living and working conditions there, and pursue her education at Columbia University. There she earned a master`s degree in economics and sociology in 1910. In the same year, she became head of the National Consumer`s League (NCL) where she lobbied for better working hours and improved working conditions. She served for the following two years as secretary. During that time, she successfully lobbied the state legislature for a bill to limit the workweek to 54 hours for both women and children.



A young Frances Perkins





A sad day for Perkins came in 1911, when she and numerous others witnessed 146 female factory workers jumping to their deaths in the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire — the building they worked in lacked fire escapes. She said it was "a never-to-be-forgotten reminder of why I had to spend my life fighting conditions that could permit such a tragedy."

Frances Perkins was visiting friends at Washington Square in the late afternoon of March 25, 1911, when they heard clanging fire engines and excited shouting. Across the Square on Washington Place, smoke and flames were billowing from the top of a ten-story building. As she looked up, a screaming girl, hair and clothing ablaze, leaped from a ninth-floor window and plunged to her death on the pavement below.



**Sweatshop workers, New York, 1911**



Frances watched in shock as others, driven by the flames, leaped from the windows.

There was not much anybody could do. Fire hoses couldn't pump water that high. Extension ladders were too short. Fire safety nets ripped apart as falling bodies struck them. Five alarms had been sounded in fifteen minutes, but even before the first engines arrived it was too late to prevent the tragedy. Fire and panic had already taken the lives of many trapped at the top of the supposedly fireproof building. The worst of the fire was over in half an hour, but bodies were still being removed at midnight. The fireproof building was little damaged. It still stood, structurally sound, but it had been no protection for the humans within it. One hundred and

forty-six young woman had died.

For Francis, the sudden horror of that spring afternoon, standing helpless as she watched screaming girls leap to death, remained so vividly in her mind that even years later the memory of it "struck at the pit of my stomach."



Francis Perkins was the first female cabinet member in U.S. history and one of only two Roosevelt cabinet appointees to serve throughout his tenure, Perkins brought to the job an unwavering devotion to social reform.

***"I came to Washington to work for God, FDR, and the millions of forgotten, plain common workingmen."***

In 1934, while serving in the cabinet, she was made chairwoman of the



President's Committee on Economic Security. A report issued by that committee laid the basis for the Social Security Act. Although it was considered at the time to be a radical departure, the proposal was accepted with enthusiasm by Roosevelt. A petition in favor of the measure was signed by 20 million people. Her most important contribution as chairwoman resulted in the Social Security Act of 1935.

When the Fair Labor Standards Act passed in 1938, Perkins had managed to persuade Congress to eliminate "labor conditions detrimental to the maintenance of the minimum standards of living

necessary for health, efficiency and well-being of workers." The law also established a minimum wage. Perkins resigned from her position as Secretary of Labor in 1945 to head the U.S. delegation to the International Labor Organization conference, held in Paris. In 1946, President Harry S. Truman appointed Perkins to the U.S. Civil Service Commission, where she served until 1953. In the latter part of her life, Perkins continued her endeavors at Cornell University as a professor of industrial and labor relations. In 1965, she died at the age of 85 in New York, and was buried with her family ancestors in New Castle, Maine.



Frances Perkins

There was some confusion as to how she should be addressed. Several tried tentative salutations such as Miss Secretary or Mrs. Secretary. She said that "Miss Perkins" seemed good enough, but that if some other title had to be used, "people are accustomed to saying 'madame chairman' and 'madame president', so I suppose the most natural thing would be to call me "Madame Secretary."

*I'm very pleased to be able to present the story of Dr.s Charles and Marion Siler, the grandparents of Carolyn Siler. Carolyn started off like many reseraches do, not expecting much from her research, but WOW. She is an active family researcher and has graciously shared much of her rich familiy history with libraries and historical societies. JAH*

## **Dr Charles A. Siler & Dr. Marion L. Pierce -their story told by Carolyn Siler**

What I knew about my grandparents when I was growing up, is likely similar to what most would know of their grandparents thru the eyes of a child.....

Grandma cooked, baked, knit, sewed...Grandpa told stories, listened to ours and both loved to spend time with family. But, thru the years I learned so much more.....



**Carolyn Siler**

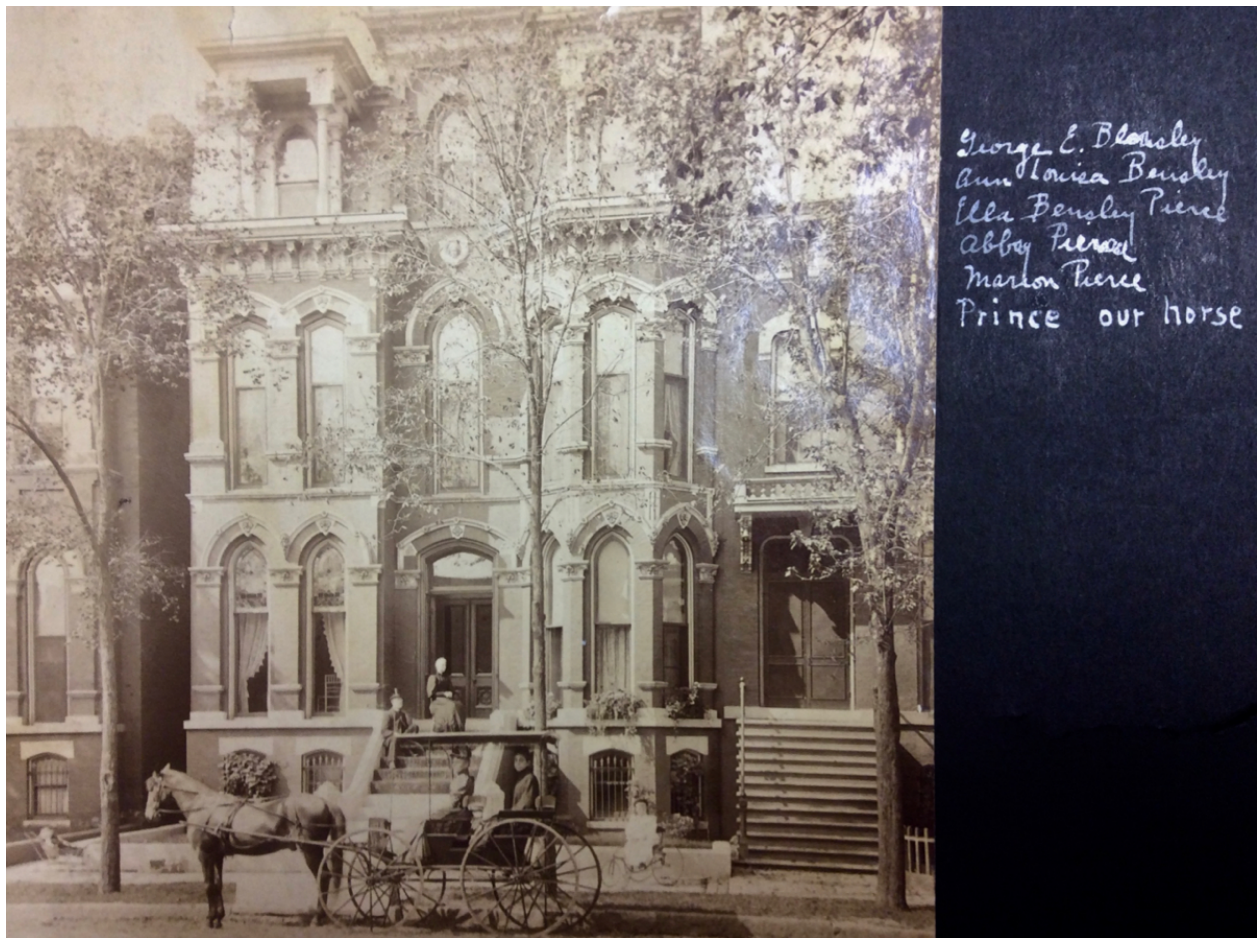


Marion Louise Pierce, born in Chicago, 11 May, 1888. The only surviving child of George and Ella Bensley Pierce. Her paternal grandparents, Asahel and Persis Abbott Pierce had traveled to Chicago by way of the Erie Canal on their honeymoon in 1835. Her maternal grandparents, George and Anna Tanner Bensley had waited until the 1860's to move their young family to Chicago from Springville, NY. Marion thrived, given much attention by Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles and cousins...she excelled musically and academically. She earned her BA at the University of Chicago after High School and then graduated from Rush Medical in 1916.

**Locket photos of Ella and George Pierce**







residence of Ella's parents, George and Anna Bensley in Chicago.....1891/2



Ella F Bensley



Anna & George Bensley 1860





Charles Arthur Siler, born @ 5 miles NE of Lawrence, Kansas, on 3 October, 1883, the 6th of 7 children born to Augustus and Elizabeth Snite Siler. His paternal grandparents, Frederick and Maria Riffel Siler, immigrants from Germany in 1854, now lived in Zanesville, Ohio. His maternal grandparents, William and Elizabeth Michel Snite, 2nd generation immigrants, also lived in Zanesville, Ohio. Charles' childhood filled with farm work and strong Bible based religious training. His curiosity and desire to learn led him to continue his education after

High School. By this time the family was living in Lawrence, within walking distance of KU. Undecided as to whether to choose Medicine or Ministry he ultimately choose Medicine. By working during Summer and teaching High School in Kansas City for 1 year, he earned tuition for Medical School, graduating in 1912. Next, he accepted the opportunity to participate in the YMCA Director Training Program in China.

Charles had met Marion at George Williams College Camp, Lake Geneva, WI during the Summer of 1912, just before he sailed for China. They corresponded thru the years, and when Marion sought his advice on what she should do after graduation in 1916....his reply " You could come to China and be my wife and Assistant", her answer "Yes!" set the course for the next 56 years they shared as husband and wife.



Marion stopped briefly in Lawrence to meet his family, then continued on to San Francisco to board a steamer bound for Japan. The prearranged scheme to locate each other on the crowded docks.....Charles would have an umbrella held overhead that he would be pumping open and closed! They married, June 16, 1916 at the American Embassy, Yokohama, Japan. Soon after traveled on to Beijing and remained affiliated with the Y training program until 1919.

**Charles Arthur Siler's early life at KU and his work in China is exciting. Next issue of JOHN will share much of his story that just couldn't be included in this issue. Look for more of his adventures in the JAN/FEB issue.**







**New York State Organization**  
Daughters of the American Revolution  
*Serving and Soaring in the Empire State!*



**National Society Daughters of the American Revolution  
Irondequoit Chapter**

Invites you and your guests to join us as we celebrate  
125 Years of Service to  
God, Home and Country

Saturday, September 14, 2019

10:00 AM - Grave Dedication for the 22nd NY State Regent

**Elizabeth Cook Babcock**

(with visits to the graves of Susan B. Anthony & Frederick Douglass)

Mt. Hope Cemetery, 1133 Mt. Hope Ave. Rochester NY

11:00 AM - Reception, Program & Luncheon at Irondequoit Chapter House

138 Troup St. Rochester NY 14608 (at the corner of 11 Livingston Park)

RSVP by September 6, 2019







The DAR Irondequiot Chapter Officers complete the DAR grave marking dedication for Elizbath S. Cook Babcock in conjunction with the Chapter's 125th Anniversary celebration on September 14, 2019







The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution  
Irondequoit Chapter, Rochester, NY

On September 14, 2019 the Irondequoit Chapter celebrated their 125th Anniversary with a DAR grave marking for Elizabeth S. Cook Babcock at The Mount Hope Cemetery in Rochester, which included visits to the graves of Susan B. Anthony (who was a member of the Irondequoit Chapter) and Frederick Douglas at the Cemetery. A formal program and luncheon followed at the Hervey Ely Chapter House, which has been home to the Irondequoit Chapter since 1920.

Please go to the Trending tab on this website to see a short slideshow featuring an overview of all the events, or paste this link: <https://youtu.be/BVTi4MjRerY> into your internet browser for viewing.



## The Hervey Ely House 138 Troop St. Rochester, NY The home of Irondequoit Chapter, organized February 15, 1894

The Hervey Ely House sits like a Greek Temple atop a hill in Corn Hill near the site of the Seneca Indians' Last Sacrifice of the White Dog. It is the sole remaining testament to the grandeur that once was the historic Third Ward's Livingston Park. Boston architect S.P. Hastings was commissioned to design this grand mansion. The style is Greek Revival, with freestanding Doric columns guarding the portico. Various entablatures, paneled pilasters, and carved capitals are other important external features. Inside the elegance continues with lavish parlors, elaborate plaster decorations, and nine fireplaces.

Mr. Ely was one of Rochester's leaders during the booming flour milling period. He made his fortune by running a general store, a sawmill and the Red Mill gristmill. Hervey Ely and his wife Caroline lived in this gracious mansion on Livingston Park, the social heart of the Third Ward for only four years. After the collapse of the grain market in 1841, Ely was forced to sell the house. He passed away at 71 and is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Over the years, this historic mansion passed from prominent owner to prominent owner, including William Kidd, president of the Rochester Savings Bank. In 1920, it was acquired by the Irondequoit Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution for their headquarters. The Hervey Ely House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is designated a landmark by the Rochester Preservation Board.





## **Clement Moore Is Believed to Have Written "A Visit from St. Nicholas" in December 24, 1822**

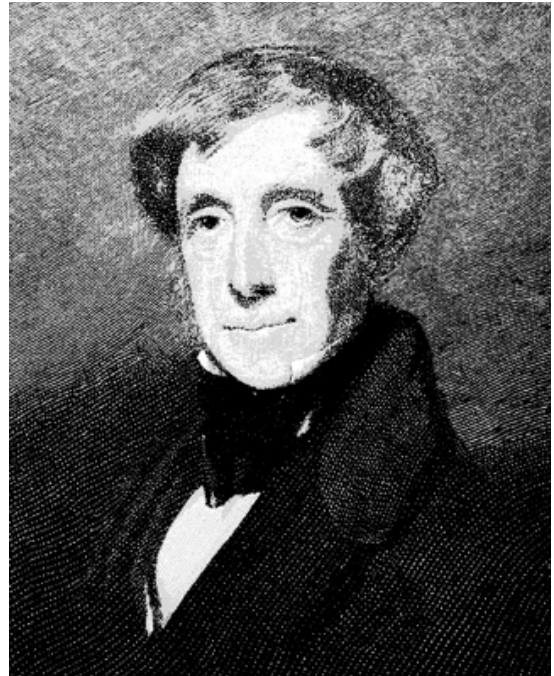
Perhaps you have read these famous words: "'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse." 'Twas the day before Christmas, December 24, the day in 1822 that Clement Moore is thought to have composed the classic poem that was then called "A Visit from St. Nicholas." You probably know it as "The Night Before Christmas." While traveling home from Greenwich Village, in Manhattan, where he had bought a turkey to donate to the poor during the holiday season, Moore penned the story for the amusement of his six children, with whom he shared the poem that evening.

He was inspired by the plump, bearded Dutchman who took him by sleigh on his errand through the snow-covered streets of New York City.

Moore's vision of St. Nicholas draws upon Dutch-American and Norwegian traditions of a magical, gift-giving figure that appears at Christmas time. It also is based on the German legend of a visitor who enters homes through chimneys. Clement Moore knew of such folklore as a learned man of literature. He was born into a well-

respected New York family in 1779. His father, Benjamin Moore, had served as president of Columbia University and Episcopal bishop of New York, participating in the inauguration of George Washington as the nation's first president.

Clement Moore graduated from Columbia. As a scholar, he is said to have been embarrassed by the light-hearted holiday poem, which somehow made its way into the public without his knowledge in December 1823. Moore did not publish it under his name until 1844. Many editions of "The Night Before Christmas" have been published over the years.





There are four hand-written copies of the poem that are known to exist and three are in museums, including the [New-York Historical Society](#) library.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through  
the house

Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;  
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;  
And Mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap;  
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the bed to see what what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the latch.  
The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen snow,  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny rein-deer,  
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his couriers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;  
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"



# *FRESH FLOWERS*



It was infamous French statesman and military leader, Napoleon Bonaparte who made the following sage observation: "In politics, absurdity is not a handicap."